

The Preaching of the First Crusade and the Persecutions of the Jews

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Abstract

Although the versions of Pope Urban's call for the First Crusade focus on the need to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, crusaders and locals attacked first the communities of the Franco-German (Ashkenazic) Jews. Both contemporary and modern historians have offered a variety of explanations for these uncalled-for devastating attacks. Without discounting some of these proposals, this article applies the psychological explanation of Displacement to offer an additional reason. The article suggests that the urgent call to retaliate against the Muslims immediately and the many graphic descriptions of alleged Muslim atrocities against Eastern Christians and Christian pilgrims in the propaganda of the First Crusade created mounting frustration in Europe. And since this frustration could not be expressed immediately and directly against its source, i.e., the faraway Muslims, the attackers displaced their aggression onto the nearby Jews. Moreover, Displacement also explains the many close parallels between the images of Muslim atrocities in crusading rhetoric and the idiosyncratic manifestations of the violence against European Jews in the early stages of the First Crusade.

Keywords

First Crusade, Jewish persecutions, Muslims, Pope Urban II

In November 1095, Pope Urban II made his renowned appeal for the First Crusade. The surviving versions of Urban's speech assign the campaign the objectives of freeing Christian places and people from the Muslims. Yet despite Urban's numerous references to Islam, his labeling it "paganism," the pinpointing of Palestine as the grand theater of this eschatological war, and the scanty reference to antique Jews¹—the Jews of Europe became the

¹ Dana Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," *American Historical*

first casualties of the First Crusade. In the spring and summer of 1096, bands of crusaders, at times with the help of the local population, destroyed Jewish life and property before leaving for the East. Thousands of Jews are reported to have lost their lives or to have been forcibly converted to Christianity. Contemporary Jewish sources focus on the devastation that took place in the Jewish communities (Ashkenazic) of the Rhineland.²

What possessed men and women to carry out their uncalled-for horrific attacks against European Jews is the subject of this article. The question is complex. The response to Urban's request was overwhelming, as Christians from all walks of life embarked on this armed expedition eastward. The crusaders constituted diverse groups with miscellaneous goals. Members of the nobility and of the so-called "popular crusaders" are mentioned, in one way or another, as participants in these attacks, occasionally with the help of the Jews' neighbors (while other neighbors offered assistance to the Jews). The nature of the Jewish and the Christian accounts pose additional challenges. Not all accounts were written by eyewitness and those that were do not guarantee historical accuracy either. Both the Jewish and Christian sources reported their accounts in the context of their own theological and social agendas.³

Review XI (1906), 231-242; H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade," *History* 55 (1970), 177-188; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 11-30, and *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 71, 72. Jill N. Claster, *Sacred Violence: The European Crusades to the Middle East, 1095-1396* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 34-39. Partial translations of these versions are available in Edward Peters, *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and other Source Materials* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 36. My translations of Guibert are from the Latin text in R.B.C. Huygens, *Guibert de Nogent, Dei gesta per Francos et cinq autres textes*. *Corpus Christianorum*, 127 A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 111-114.

² The most useful accounts are the Mainz Anonymous, Eliezer bar Nathan's account, and the account attributed to Solomon bar Samson. I used the Hebrew texts in Eva Haverkamp's critical edition *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs*. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Bd. 1 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2005). English translations in Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977). For translations of the Mainz Anonymous and Solomon Bar Samson's account see also Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

³ For the Latin accounts see note 1 above. For different methodological approaches to the Hebrew accounts, see Robert Chazan, "The Facticity of Medieval Narrative: A Case

It is not surprising, therefore, that modern historiography has proposed various motivations for the massacres of the Ashkenazic Jews and identified different culprits. Earlier studies often ascribed the anti-Jewish violence to greedy mobs.⁴ More recent analyses acknowledge instances of greed, but link religious idealism to anti-Jewish violence.⁵ Robert Chazan has viewed religious idealism together with the calls to fight the “enemies of God” as the attackers’ rationale resulting from a popular distortion of Urban’s call.⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith has maintained that religious idealism

Study of the Hebrew First Crusade Narratives,” *The Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies Review* 16 (1992), 31-56; and more recently his *God, Humanity and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 2000), especially pp. 19-110. Ivan G. Marcus, “From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusading Riots,” *Prooftext* 2 (1982), 40-52; “History, Story and Collective Memory: Narrative in Early Ashkenazic Culture,” in *The Midrashic Imagination*, ed. Michael Fishbane (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), pp. 255-279; Jeremy Cohen, “*Gezerot Tatnu*: Martyrdom and Martyrology in the Hebrew Chronicles of 1096” [Hebrew], *Zion* 59 (1994), 169-208; “The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles in Their Christian Cultural Context,” in *Juden und Christen zur Zeit Der Kreuzzuge*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999), 87-106; *Sanctifying the name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 39-57. Obviously, the rhetorical aspect of these sources must be considered. But the rhetoric, metaphors, and symbols are also expressions of the reality that transpired, even if the depictions of this reality were not as accurate as one would wish.

⁴ Hans Mayer summarized the “real motivation” in a word: greed. H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 41. Steven Runciman presents the violence against the Jews as the crusaders’ attempt to liberate themselves from old debts owed to Jews and as a way of sponsoring the expensive holy war. Steven Runciman, *The First Crusade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 62-65. But see Michael Toch’s superb article, “The Economic Activities of German Jews in the 10th to 12th Centuries: Between Historiography and History” in *Facing the Cross: The Persecutions of 1096 in History and Historiography* (in Hebrew), ed. by Yom Tov Assis et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000), 32-54. David Malkiel correctly concluded that “greed as a motivation does not suffice to explain the crusaders’ behavior,” but dismisses the important question of motivation too easily: “Why the crusaders sought to murder Jews [in 1096] remains a puzzle.” *Reconstructing Ashkenaz: The Human Face of Franco-German Jewry, 1000-1250* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 75, 84.

⁵ A survey is provided by Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096,” *Jewish History* 12:2 (Fall, 1998), 11-31; Tyerman adds to this “obscene cocktail” political reasons, *God’s War*, 103-105. More generally, early expressions of piety are addressed by Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁶ Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, 51-52, 63-65, 75, 76, 80-81; Jean Flori, *La Première croisade: l’occident chrétien contre l’Islam: (aux origines des idéologies*

led to the attackers' failure to distinguish between the Muslim and the Jewish "enemy." Consequently, crusaders desired to avenge both the Muslims' treatment of Christians and their holy places and the alleged Jewish killing of Christ.⁷ Related views include messianic, apocalyptic, and millennial expectations, which made the conversion of the Jews a prerequisite.⁸

occidentales): 1095-1099. *La Mémoire des siècles* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1992), 46, 51, 54; idem, *La guerre sainte: la formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'Occident chrétien*. Collection historique (Paris: Aubier, 2001), 302ff; "Une ou plusieurs 'première croisade'? Le message d'Urban II et les plus anciens pogroms d'Occident," *Revue Historique* 285 (1991), 22-26. Robert Chazan, "The Anti-Jewish Violence of 1096: Perpetrators and Dynamics," in *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 21-43. Jeremy Cohen, "Christian Theology and Anti-Jewish Violence in the Middle Ages: Connections and Disjunctions," in *Religious Violence*, 44-47 and Jonathan Riley-Smith in the next footnote; John France, *The Crusades and the Expansion of Catholic Christendom, 1000-1714* (London: Routledge, 2005), 59. Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 84-85.

⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith has viewed the crusade as a religious event and an expression of sincere piety. Riley-Smith, "The First Crusade and the Persecution of the Jews," *Studies in Church History*, 21 (1984), 51-72, especially 67 and 69; idem, *The First Crusade*, 55-57 and *The Crusades: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 24; H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Martyrdom and the First Crusade," in Peter W. Edbury, ed., *Crusade and Settlement* (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 46-56; Jean Flori, "Une ou plusieurs 'première croisade'?", 17; on the inability of Europeans to distinguish between Jews and Muslims see Allan Harris Cutler and Helen Elmquist Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986). Although one may disagree with the Cutlers' theory, the connection they have made between events in the East and anti-Jewish violence in the Latin West is of value to this study. Israel J. Yuval discusses the vengeance motif in *Two nations in your womb: perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 141-2 and n. 17 for bibliography. The idea of crusading as vengeance as been recently revised by Susanna A. Throop, *Crusading As an Act of Vengeance, 1095-1216* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). In contrast to Riley-Smith's view, Throop argues that "although there was some emphasis on vengeance from 1095 through 1137," the concept of crusading as vengeance appears more in the Latin accounts of the early twelfth-century, therefore, questioning the role of vengeance in the attacks, 70-71. This important book came out after I had submitted this article for review and, therefore, was not available to me when writing this article. I thank the anonymous reviewer for bringing Throop's book to my attention. The vengeance motif is discussed below.

⁸ Paul Alphandéry and Alphonse Dupront, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade* (Bibliothèque de l'évolution de l'humanité, 10) (Paris: A. Michel, 1995). André Vauchez, "Les Composantes Escatologiques de l'idée de Croisade," in *Le concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'appel à la croisade: actes du Colloque universitaire international de Clermont-Ferrand*,

Other opinions have placed the violence in a socio-theological context. Ivan Marcus has attributed the violence to the peasants' and villagers' endeavoring to establish "the right order." They understood their mission "to be the liberation of the towns in their path from the infidel Jews, and pillaging of Jewish property." Marcus calls the violence of 1096 "ritualized public acts directed at the 'other.'" According to Gavin Langmuir, it was mainly lay people from the lower rural and urban classes who attacked the Jews, in order to reassure themselves of the value of their existence in a changing Christian society. Kenneth Stow has proposed that the attacks resulted from a preexisting quest to create a "pure Christian society." The same Christian impulse to cleanse the Holy Land from Muslims drove Christians to attack the Jews at home. Stow also adds that both nobles and "vagabond bands" reacted to outside and inside threats by attacking the Jews. The implications of such attacks were that "any medieval Christian" . . . might displace the blame for his plight away from personal inadequacies and project it onto—the Jew . . ."⁹

Finally, Jeremy Cohen sees in crusading "ideology and conduct of holy war" together with Christian anti-Judaism a major motivation for the massacres of 1096. Still, Cohen suggests that different explanations are hardly mutually exclusive. Factors such as hostility toward the "infidel," historical

23-25 juin 1995. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome, 236 (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1997), 233-243. Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Forcible Baptisms of 1096: History and Historiography," in *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte: Peter Herde zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen dargebracht*, ed. Herde, Peter, Karl Borchardt, and Enno Bünz (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1998), 1:187-200; idem, "Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096," *Jewish History* 12:2 (1998), 11-31. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, 24-25. Robert Chazan, "Let Not a Remnant or a Residue Escape": Millenarian Enthusiasm in the First Crusade," *Speculum* 84/2 (2009), 289-313. Bernard McGinn plays down the impact of apocalyptic beliefs, "*Iter sancti sepulchri*: the piety of the first crusaders," in *Essays on Medieval Civilization: The Walter Prescott Webb memorial lectures*, 12, Sullivan, Richard Eugene, Bede K. Lackner, and Kenneth R. Philip (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1978), especially 47f.

⁹ Marcus, "Hierarchies, Religious Boundaries and Jewish Spirituality in Medieval Germany," *Jewish History* 1:2 (Fall, 1986), 7. Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 64, 87, 93-99, especially 97; idem, "At the Frontiers of Faith," in *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews*, 138-156. But anti-Jewish sentiments among crusaders from southern France are mentioned in *Le Liber de Raymond d'Aguiliers*, ed. John Hill and Laurita Hill (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1969), 115. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 106-7, 110-111.

ecclesiastical anti-Jewish teaching, crusading spirit, and medieval codes of vengeance, therefore, also played a role.¹⁰

Similarly, this article considers the question of the motivation for the massacres of 1096 in the larger context of the crusade. More specifically, this article asks how and why Urban's call to fight the Muslims in the East stimulated violence against the Jews in the West? An answer, I believe, lies in the dynamics that were set by the Christians' perceptions of Muslims' violence against Eastern Christians and Christian pilgrims. These perceptions generated the stimuli for the attacks and provided the inspiration for their diverse formats. To understand the leap from Christian perceptions to persecutions of Jews, it is necessary to compare these perceptions and the remedy they were believed to have required to the descriptions of violence against European Jews. It is by such a comparison that a perspective on what motivated the attacks against the Jews and especially on what inspired their different modes of violence can be gained.

Urban's Sermon

All the versions of Pope Urban's speech at Clermont contain descriptions of Muslims' atrocities. Reports from the East about the appalling treatment of Christians and their holy places in Muslim lands are said to have fuelled Urban's outrage. The accuracy of Urban's wording is less of a concern here, than are his anti-Muslim accusations.¹¹ The fact that many of these accusations are mentioned in the accounts of eyewitnesses and of non-participants at Clermont suggests that stories of cruelty against Christians and Christianity were a major theme in crusading propaganda. In a less flowery style, Urban's short letter written in 1095 urged "both princes and subjects" to save fellow Christians from basically the same atrocities

¹⁰ *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 1-4.

¹¹ Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Croisade et jihad vus par l'ennemi: une etude des perceptions mutuelles des motivations," in *Autour de la Première Croisade*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 345-358. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 48-50. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto, *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Rolling Armour, Sr., *Islam, Christianity, and the West: A Troubled History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 63-66; Rodney Stark lists a number of attacks against Christian pilgrims before the Seljuk invasion. *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2009), 91-92. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, 16-19.

that are detailed in the versions of his speech at Clermont. According to his letter, Christians learned “from many reports about the barbaric fury (of the Muslims) that has deplorably afflicted and laid waste the churches of God in the regions of the Orient.”¹² Urban mentioned the need to restrain by force the Muslims’ “savagery” and liberate the Asian Church from the Muslims’ “tyranny” in two other letters.¹³ Clearly, the references that are ascribed to Urban at Clermont are not as reliable as his own letters. But taken together, these documents reveal similar concerns with alleged Muslims’ atrocities and strong desires to punish them for these atrocities. As Urban himself indicated, many reports (*multum relatione*) of the Muslims’ fury and savagery had been already in circulation. The response to Urban’s speech reveals the sentiments that his speech and the many circulating reports generated. These stories inflated the accusations and became more inflammatory as the enthusiasm for the crusade kept growing.

Of significance are the frequent images of Christian suffering at the hands of brutal Muslims in the versions of Urban’s speech. Pope Urban is believed to have emphasized in his speech: (1) the great humiliation and suffering Muslims were inflicting on Christendom, (2) the theological need to avenge this humiliation, (3) the urgency to react immediately against the dangerous Muslims, and (4) the great terrestrial and celestial rewards that awaited the crusaders.

The several versions of the pope’s speech present a humiliating and dire situation. The losses to the “inferior” Muslim, the killing of Christians, and the destruction of holy places became an “unspeakable shame.”¹⁴ Shame is an apparent theme in the eyewitness account of Fulcher of Chartres. “O what a shame (*O quantum dedecus*), if a people, so despised, degenerate, and enslaved by demons would thus overcome a people endowed with the trust of almighty God, and shining in the name of Christ.”¹⁵ It was a great disgrace that followers of demons enslaved Christ’s devotees.

¹² Hinrich Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes. Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1973), 136; English translation is available in Peters, *The First Crusade*, 42.

¹³ Peters, *The First Crusade*, 44-46; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 61.

¹⁴ Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:12-13, 15.

¹⁵ Fulcher of Chartres in Heinrich Hagenmeyer, *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana (1095-1127)* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1913), 135-136. English translation is

Humiliation called for reprisal. Christians were believed to be targeted because of their religion. Vengeance, therefore, emerges in Urban's speech as a religious obligation. The Latin West was asked to protect Christianity and avenge the many injuries to Christians and their creed. "On whom therefore is the labor of avenging (*ulciscendum*) these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you?" the pope is quoted as demanding in Robert the Monk's version.¹⁶ Christians were asked "to avenge your God, your father, your brother, whom you see reproached, banished from his estates, crucified..."¹⁷ Retribution was specifically aimed at Muslims.¹⁸

available in Harold S. Fink, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1969).

¹⁶ Robert the Monk, "Historia Iherosolimitana," *RHC Oc.* III:728. English translations are available in Sweetenham Carol, *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade [Historia Iherosolimitana]*, Crusade texts in translation, 11. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 80, and also in Peters, *The First Crusade*, 26-29.

¹⁷ Baldric of Dol, "Historia Iherosolimitana," *RHC Oc.* IV:101. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, 48-49. Flori, *La Première croisade*, 38, 51.

¹⁸ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III, book VI, II; Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk's*, 147. Similar words were ascribed by Robert to Kebogha's mother. God promised to "render vengeance to mine enemies and will reward them that hate me" (Deuteronomy, 32:41). Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk's*, 155. Also the letter of crusaders from the battlefield to Urban: "we the pilgrims of Jesus Christ avenged (*vindicavimus*) the harm to Highest God." Fulcher of Chartre, Hagenmeyer, *Fulcheri Carnotensis*, 291. And again, Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:729. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 28. More examples in Susanna Throop, "Vengeance and the Crusades," in *Crusades* 5 (2006), 21-38. In four of the five Latin eyewitness accounts about Urban's call there were almost no references to vengeance of any kind, according to Throop, 24. In her book, Throop argues that only two letters of the First Crusade, and the forged Encyclical of Sergius IV show that the idea of crusading as vengeance existed in the late eleventh century. Among the eyewitness accounts in Latin, Throop found reference to vengeance only in the accounts of Fulcher of Chartres, Peter Tudebode, Raymond of Aguilers, and the *Gesta Francorum*. Crusading as an act of vengeance, asserts Throop, is more prominent in the sources written by non-participants in the early twelfth century. Her findings lead Throop to conclude that the idea of vengeance was not a widespread popular belief before the First Crusade, 44-52. Still, there is no telling how dominant vengeance was in the unrecorded speeches that circulated in the open air. It is possible that the frequent references to vengeance in the early twelfth-century accounts were a reflection of an existing popular idea among the first crusaders. References to vengeance in the non-monastic *Gesta Francorum* may indicate such a reflection among crusaders, *Gesta Francorum*, 17, 54. Requests in the account that God take vengeance on his enemies do not diminish the power and popularity of vengeance. How is God to take vengeance if not through his devoted crusaders who perceived the crusade as an act of

Vengeance could not wait. The accusations of Muslim crimes and cruelty, as well as the fear that Islam would continue to spread, created a great deal of anxiety and impatience to act.¹⁹ An alarm against the advance of countless Muslims on Europe was sounded. Time was of the essence and functioned on two levels. Urban's call to rescue Christian sacred places gave the crusaders a role in a sacred time. Christianity had to be established "where now is paganism." Contemporary conditions marked the "Times of the Gentiles." But if Christians acted promptly, "Gentiles' Times," would become the promised "Christian Time" of scripture. The apocalyptic dimension in Urban's call made the fight against the Muslims an urgent battle against the Antichrist himself.²⁰

Should the apocalyptic vision appear too abstract to comprehend, the running-of-time motif surfaced in crusading propaganda in a more mundane context as well. Urban urged his audience to consider the events in the here and now. The crusaders were to "advance boldly, as knights of Christ, and rush as quickly as you can to the defense of the Eastern Church."²¹

Fulcher of Chartres' version stressed Urban's call to act now. "Now that you are aroused by divine correction," was the time to "hasten to the way;"

imitatio Christi? The presentation of vengeance as a divine act makes vengeance a theological obligation during the crusade. It may also be argued that the more frequent references to vengeance in the accounts of non-participants attest to the existence of the idea in Europe, our place of interest here. Indeed, Throop does indicate that vengeance as a theological and social idea existed in medieval Christendom before 1095, and "was in circulation at the time of the First Crusade," 47. Another preexisting concept of vengeance was the Germanic *Blutrache*, according to Israel J. Yuval, "Vengeance and Damnation, Blood and Defamation: From Jewish Martyrdom to Blood Libel Accusations" (in Hebrew) *Zion* 58 (1993): 33-90, especially 41. The question, then, is not of existence, but of degree and terminology.

¹⁹ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 135. In addition to the need to defend Christendom, medieval social codes required that vengeance be taken right way. Throop, *Crusading as Vengeance*, 21-22.

²⁰ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 114; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 35. On the eschatological impact of the conflict see Jean Flori, *L'Islam et la fin des temps: l'interprétation prophétique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale* (Univers historique. Paris: Seuil, 2007). The alarming letter of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to those in the West emphasizes the superiority of the Muslim armies and kingdoms. Heinrich Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes. Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 146-149.

²¹ Balderic of Dol, "Historia Jerosolimitana," *RHC Oc.* IV:12-16, my emphasis. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 30, 31. Again, Urban made similar accusations in his letter to the Faithful of Flanders, see n. 12 above.

"now" was the time to become soldiers of Christ; "now... to fight the barbarians;" "now" was the crusaders' time "to win their eternal reward." Faithful fighters should no longer "delay" or "postpone" their journey. If they did, they would be guilty of permitting the Muslims to ravage the Kingdom of God (*regnum Dei vastando*). It was urgent to act now "before it is too late." The great battle had to be "undertaken now." Otherwise, more of God's faithful will be further suppressed (*fideles Dei supergredientur*).²² If the Muslims were not stopped immediately, Christian Europe would be subjugated next.

In response to crusade preaching, anyone of pure heart "no longer hesitated (*non dubitasset*) but hastened (*celeris accipere*) to go voluntarily to the Holy Sepulcher." The Franks "immediately" (*protinus*) sewed crosses on their right shoulders and "very soon" (*iamianque*) joined the armies. With a great sense of urgency, Urban, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priests, "set out as quickly as possible... to deliver sermons and to preach eloquently." Urban's emotional pleas and grievances were not limited to literate chronicle propaganda.²³ Urban put in motion a well-running propaganda apparatus to mass communicate his urgent message: retaliate immediately against the Muslim enemy.²⁴

To meet the enemy, however, crusaders needed first to travel safely hundreds of miles, only then to take their chances against an allegedly most dangerous foe. The non-threatening Jews were within arm's reach and vulnerable. Violating the so-called Augustinian doctrine of Jewish tolerance and physical protection,²⁵ both the crusaders who could no longer wait to punish the Muslims in the East and "wannabe" crusaders who fantasized about doing so without actually leaving their towns, or at least felt obli-

²² Fulcher of Chartres, in Hagenmeyer, *Fulcheri Carnotensis*, 134-135.

²³ Urban delivered his messages in the open air. His preaching was well organized and his messages repeated in local ceremonies and assemblies. The key to Urban's success, writes Christopher Tyerman, "lay in the incorporation of existing images and emotions into a fresh concept of secular spirituality." Tyerman, *God's War*, 66, 74-75; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 56-60; and see again Claster, *Sacred Violence*, 34-39. According to Guibert of Nogent, the emotional reaction that immediately followed Urban's call traveled faster than the organized preaching, making it superfluous. Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta*, 124.

²⁴ Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, publié par John H. Hill et Laurita Hill (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1977), 32.

²⁵ For this violation and its consequences see Kenneth Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness: Emicho of Floheim and the Fear of Jews in the Twelfth Century," *Speculum* 76/4 (2001), 911-933.

gated to assist the crusaders, could redirect their aggressiveness against the Jews of Europe. Thus, the attackers could have their immediate satisfaction risk-free before meeting the Muslims in the east, and those who did not plan to join the long journey could feel exonerated from any blame.²⁶ These attackers enhanced their satisfaction by modeling their violent acts on the First Crusade's propagandistic examples of Muslims' atrocities. This is evident from the following comparison between the Jewish and Christian crusading accounts.

Greed, Creed and Punishment

In his *Historia Ierosolimitans*, Albert of Aachen viewed the defeat of the "pilgrims" (*peregrinos*) and their aristocratic leaders, Count Emicho, Thomas of Marle, Clarembald, and William the "Carpenter" in Hungary as divine judgment, for (among other crimes) they had "punished the exiled Jews (who are admittedly hostile to Christ) with a great massacre, rather from greed for their money than for divine justice, since God is a just judge and commands no one to come to the yoke of the Catholic faith against his will or under compulsion."²⁷ Albert's explanation for the pilgrims' defeat suggests that avarice was the attackers' motivation. But his complaint about the attackers' violating the canonical rules by forcing the Jews to convert complicates his argument of avarice. Earlier in his account, Albert admitted that he had no clear explanation for the reason behind the massacres.

²⁶ As the sources indicate, not all the crusaders and townspeople participated in the violence against the Jews. Why different people react differently to a condition is another enigmatic question that will require a thorough investigation of individuals; an investigation that our sources do not permit. In any case, the question that this article is trying to answer is not why some acted violently while others did not. Rather, as stated from the outset, the goal is to find out why those who acted violently acted in this manner and what inspired their modes of violence.

²⁷ Albert of Aachen, "*Recueil Des Historiens Des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux*" (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844-1895) (hereafter *RHC Oc.*), IV:295. Latin text and English translation are available in Susan Edgington, *Historia Ierosolimitana* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 56-59.

I know not whether by a judgment of the Lord, or by some error of mind, they rose in a spirit of cruelty against the Jewish people scattered throughout these cities and slaughtered them without mercy. . . .²⁸

Here, this fierce critic of the attackers considered the fate of the Jews a possible divine punishment, or the result of the attacker's error of mind, which are left unexplained. When the two statements are considered together, it appears that Albert found the avarice explanation unsatisfactory for what he was about to describe next.

According to Albert, the "massacre of the Jews was first carried out in the city of Cologne by the citizens. They suddenly attacked a small band of Jews, they decapitated many and inflicted serious wounds, they overthrew their homes and synagogues, dividing a substantial sum of money among themselves." After seeing "this cruelty," about two hundred Jews fled by boat to nearby Neuss, but were hunted down. The "pilgrims and crusaders (*peregrine et cruce signati*) inflicted upon them a similar slaughter leaving not even one alive." After having been "punished" (*multatos*) with this kind of massacre, they were robbed of all their possessions by the pilgrims.²⁹ Accordingly, the attack went beyond greed. If greed were the attackers' only goal, the murders and mutilations would not have been necessary. Similarly, the narrative about the Jews at Neuss illustrates the attackers' determination to search for Jews and destroy them in a similar cruel fashion.

Albert provides another valuable piece of information. Albert differentiated between the attackers. They included Cologne's citizens, and "the pilgrims and the crusaders." His differentiation between the last two groups may suggest that not only the so-called "peasant crusaders" (the "pilgrims" who were destroyed in Hungary) participated in the violence. Elsewhere, Albert identified by name the magnets Count Emicho, Clarendald, and Thomas of Marle as the leaders of the armies that massacred the Rhineland Jews with the help of the non-traveling local population.³⁰ Albert's account indicates that members of the nobility, the citizens, and

²⁸ Albert of Aachen, *RHC Oc.*, IV:292. Edgington, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 50-51.

²⁹ *RHC Oc.* IV:292; Edgington, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 50-51; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 110.

³⁰ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, *RHC Oc.* IV:293. Although not consistent in his use of terminology, Albert distinguished between "pilgrims" and "soldiers," *RHC Oc.*, IV:371; or "Christ's soldiers, the pilgrims, and their princes," *RHC Oc.*, IV:416.

the so-called unruly “peasant crusaders” participated in these organized attacks on the Jews.

More details are offered in the Hebrew accounts. Cologne Jews are said to have found refuge in the houses of their Christian neighbors. The “enemies” rose up against them, destroying the synagogue and their houses and “taking spoil and seizing booty.” Thereafter, they went hunting for Jews on the roads. Isaac bar Eliakim was seized and killed after he had left his house. “They also found” Rebecca, after she had left her house to join her husband. The attackers discovered her on the road, carrying “gold and silver in her sleeves.” “They took the money from her and killed her.”³¹ As in Albert’s account, after Cologne, continues the Hebrew account, both “the marked enemy (with the insignia, i.e., crusaders) as well as the (unmarked) others” gathered in the village of Neuss. In Neuss they continued their hunt for Jews. Samuel bar Asher and his two sons were killed on the bank of the Rhine River, although, at this point, the account shifts from looting to torture and forced baptism.³²

On the face of it, such random encounters on the roads appear to be motivated by greed. Indeed, greed cannot be completely dismissed as a motivation. Yet, the Hebrew accounts say that the assailants rejected Jewish bribes, or that they conducted their attacks after receiving bribes.³³ Neither the Jews nor the Christians reduced the violence to a rudimentary and accidental expression of materialism. For the assailants, pillaging constituted the beginning of their holy war to amend Christian suffering in the East. Urban implored his listeners to “consider what taxes, what violence they [pilgrims] underwent, since they were forced to make payments and tributes almost every mile, to purchase release at every gate of the city, at the entrance of the churches and temples, at every side-journey from place to place.”³⁴ The violent extortion of pilgrims is presented as part of the Muslims’ religious war on Christendom.

³¹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 401-405; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 273-275. On the Jewish report of Cologne see Robert Chazan, “The Deeds of the Jewish Community of Cologne,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1984), 185-195.

³² Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 407-409; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 273-275.

³³ Bribe prevented an attack by Duke Godfrey in Cologne. Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 297. But according to the Solomon bar Simson account, “ultimately, all the bribes and entreaties were of no avail to protect us on the day of wrath and misfortune,” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 295. Or in the case of Emicho, “we dispatched seven pounds of gold to the evil Emicho, but it was of no avail,” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 311.

³⁴ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 116; Peters, 36-37.

By exploiting the Jews in the same ways that Muslims were thought to have exploited Christians, crusaders desired to reverse their perception of reality. The new *peregrine milites Christi*³⁵ took it upon themselves to overturn this degradation of the traditional unarmed pilgrims. Rebecca—representing a trend rather than just an individual case—was not killed randomly merely for her “gold and silver.” She was killed as retaliation for the alleged killings of Christian pilgrims by Muslims for their “gold and silver.”³⁶

Such reversed reenactments were meant to end the self-image of the victimized unarmed pilgrim and empower the militant pilgrim. Different from the conventional pilgrims who had reached the Holy Sepulcher only with “wallet and staff” and were ridiculed, mocked and “even put to death,” the new militant pilgrims went after Jews “wherever a Jew could flee to save his life.”³⁷ For the most part, therefore, the assailants’ inverted reenactments went beyond financial exploitation. Fiscal extortions quickly became physical. Now armed pilgrims and the “unmarked” pilgrim “wannabes” could finally have the satisfaction of having a massacre done “by,” rather than unto, the *peregrinis*.³⁸

Images of looting share additional characteristics with the images of Muslims prowling after Christian pilgrims. According to Albert of Aachen, after Cologne, the same pilgrims, together with “Count Emicho, a noble man and very powerful in this region,” and his “great band of Germans” prepared to attack the Jews of Mainz. Meanwhile, the Jews of Mainz entrusted Bishop Ruthard with the task of protecting their “incredible quantity of money.” When Emicho and his followers forced their way into the city,

They slaughtered the women in just the same way, and cut down with their swords young children, whatever their age and sex. The Jews, indeed seeing how the Christian enemy were rising up against them and their little children and were sparing none of any age, even turned upon themselves and their companions, on children, women, mothers and sisters, and they all killed each other. Mothers with children at their breast—who horrible to relate—would cut their throats with knives, would stab others

³⁵ Ekkehard of Aura, “Hierosolymita,” 39.

³⁶ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 116. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 37.

³⁷ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:791-792; Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 347.

³⁸ *Annales Brunwilarenses*: “Strages Iudaeorum Coloniae et Mogunitae a peregrinis facta est.” *MGH S.* I:100; XVI:726. My emphasis.

preferring that they should die thus at their hands, rather than be killed by the weapons of the uncircumcised.³⁹

As in Cologne, the pilgrims, the locals, and nobles are reported to have been determined to hunt down the Jews of Mainz in order to rob and kill them, “as they had vowed.”⁴⁰ Since the money had been hidden, Emicho and his followers had to content themselves only with murder. As in previous attacks, they slaughtered and cut down women and children “in just the same way.” According to Albert, Jewish women killed themselves and Jewish mothers killed their children at their breast. These women are said to have cut and stabbed their loved ones and themselves to avoid such death at the hands of the “uncircumcised.”

Jewish descriptions of the violence in Mainz also evoke the images of the Muslims’ malicious victimization of Christians in their search for money. Take for example the story of Rachel of Mainz. Rachel is said to have locked herself and her four children in a room. There she slaughtered her four children before the crusaders could capture them. After “sacrificing” the four,

She placed them *in her two sleeves*, two on each side, at her stomach (*é’z’l me’eyah*), and they were quivering on her, until the enemy seized the room, and found her sitting and lamenting over them. They told her: “Show us the treasure that you have *in your sleeves*.” When they saw that the children were slaughtered, they beat her and killed her over them.⁴¹

It is hard to imagine the crusaders mistaking the quivering children in Rachel’s blood-soaked sleeves for money. One of the story’s intentions, of course, is to show the brutality of the attackers. But the story also discloses a trend of crusaders going to great lengths in search of hidden money. Taking the Hebrew and the Latin accounts together, Rachel’s story represents

³⁹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 1:292-293; translation in Edgington, 51-53.

⁴⁰ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 1:292. The Mainz Anonymous states that the “errant ones gathered, the nobles, and the commoners from all the provinces” participated in the attacks. The account mentions the nobleman Ditrma by name. Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 261; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 226.

⁴¹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 359, emphasis mine; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 239, 258-259. On the function of the term “sleeves” see Ivan G. Marcus, “The Representation of Reality in the Narratives of 1096,” *Jewish History* 13:2 (Fall, 1999), 37-48, especially 40-41. Jeremy Cohen carefully investigated Rachel’s story in *Sanctifying the Name of God*, ch. 6. See also Yuval. *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 158-159.

a Jewish reaction to a crusaders' violent pattern of raiding, killing, and mutilating.

Rachel's story is sandwiched between two descriptions of crusaders stripping the dead and those who were still quivering in their blood. Crusaders are described as moving from room to room in search of Jews and money. When they "found them still quivering and covered in blood," the attackers took their money and "stripped them naked and beat the rest."⁴² Emicho is reported to have had no "mercy on the elderly or on young women; he had no pity on the infants and the suckling and the sickly . . . their young men he put to the sword and their pregnant women he ripped open" (2 Kings 8:12). A poem by R. David bar Meshulam laments the ripping open of beautiful women. The *Annales S. Disibodi* extended this form of execution to men as well. Many were massacred and many others torn to pieces (*diripiebantur*).⁴³

After the crusaders were done stripping the dead and dying of their clothing, they "threw them from the chambers through the windows naked, heap upon heap, and mound upon mound, until they became like a high mountain." Similar scenes were reported at Worms. The Jews there "were killed like oxen and were dragged through the market places and streets . . . and lay naked, for they stripped them and left them naked." Habitually, the nude corpses were left unburied, serving "as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth" (Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20). This practice seems to have been the norm, for burials were considered "a miracle." The anonymous *Annalista Saxo* confirms such scenes. "Many and great heaps (*acrervos*) were removed on wagons from Mainz," Cologne, Worms, and other cities throughout Gaul and Germany. Albert's account, the *Annalista Saxo*, and the vocabulary of the *Annales S. Disibodi* indicate that the Hebrew accounts convey a measure of accuracy, however symbolic of such acts Rachel's story may be. Although not always presented together, many descriptions of looting included brutality.⁴⁴

⁴² Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 353, 359-361; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 238, 239; 258, 260.

⁴³ Emicho in Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 309; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 251. Meshulam's poem in Abraham M. Habermann and Yitzhak Baer, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Tsafat: divre zikhronot mi-bene ha-dorot shebi-tekufat mas'e ha-tselav u-mivhar piyutehem* (Jerusalem: Tarshish, 1945), 71 (hereafter *Sefer Gezerot*). *Annales S. Disibodi*, MGH S., 17:16.

⁴⁴ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 361, 385; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 238, 266-267. For Worms, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 283-285; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 229. Additional descriptions in Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 275-277; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 245. Treatment of bodies, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 433; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 280. See also Haverkamp,

Why did crusaders bother to strip their victims naked and stack them without a burial,⁴⁵ if money was all they wanted? Why did they rip women and men open? Why did they beat the rest, when, or even after, money was offered? Why would crusaders go to such lengths in their attacks?⁴⁶

Hebräische, 369; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 241, 261. Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 389; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 267. In Worms, those who escaped the first attack are said to have provided garments for the dead. It is not clear who buried the Jewish martyrs in Xanten. Eva Haverkamp suggests that the burial motif follows the same theme in Sigebert's *Passio* about the Christian martyrs there. "Martyrs in rivalry: the 1096 Jewish martyrs and the Thebean Legion," *Jewish History* 23/4 (2009), 323-324, 327. *Annalista Saxo*, MGH S. 37:491. "...eratque miseria spectare multos et magnos occisorum acervos efferri in plaustris de civitate Mogontia." A poem by R. Abraham depicts similar episodes of men and women being dragged naked in Mainz. Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 62.

⁴⁵ Jeremy Cohen associates the stripping of bodies with Jesus' crucifixion. "The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles in their Christian Cultural Context," *Juden und Christen*, 27. Susan Einbinder has suggested a sexual connotation to the stripping of female bodies. "Jewish Women Martyrs: Changing Models of Representation," *Exemplaria* 12 (2000), 117-119. David Malkiel sees the stripping of bodies as a literary motif rooted in the biblical story of Saul's suicide. *Reconstructing Ashkenaz*, 292 n. 11.

⁴⁶ Robert Chazan rightly argues that the medieval period suffered from general lawlessness and violence. *European Jewry*, 15, 33-34, 36. In the case of Mainz, Chazan writes: "Reflected here is a cruel thoroughness that goes beyond ordinary military behavior," *European Jewry*, 71. As far as we can tell, previous incidents of anti-Jewish violence did not produce such brutality. The serious allegations that the Jews were involved in the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher generated anti-Jewish violence in Europe in the eleventh century. But the brutality that is described in the Jewish and Christian sources does not match that of 1096. On this event and the false accusations see Marius Canard, "Destruction de l'Église de la Résurrection," *Byzantion* 35 (1965), 16-43; Robert Chazan, "1007-1012: Initial Crisis for Northern-European Jewry," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* XXXVII-XXXIX (1970-1971), 101-117; Richard Landes, "The Massacres of 1010: On the Origins of Popular Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Europe," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, Bd. 11. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 79-112; John France, "The Destruction of Jerusalem and the First Crusade," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996), 1-17, especially 8-10; Daniel F. Callahan, "The Cross, the Jews, and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Writings of Ademar of Chabannes," in *Christian Attitudes toward the Jews in the Middle Ages: A Casebook*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 15-23; Phyllis G. Jestice, "A Great Jewish Conspiracy? Worsening Jewish-Christian Relations and the Destruction of the Holy Sepulcher" in *Christian Attitude*, 25-42; Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 38-39. Jewish and Christian reports mentioned additional anti-Jewish persecutions in eleventh-century France and Germany. In these cases, too, the descriptions of violence differ greatly from those of 1096. In most cases, the outcome was martyrdom and

At first glance, the crusaders' acts show the extent of their greediness: even the victims' clothes were not spared.⁴⁷ Yet, the overall brutality went beyond the desire to extract wealth. The treatment of bodies recalls medieval rituals for suicides. A "threshold ritual" required that suicides be removed otherwise than over the main threshold. Suicides were usually removed through windows or openings made in the wall. Thereafter, the bodies were dragged to the town gallows for hanging publicly with dishonor. For the crusaders, the Jews became their enemies in life, and ungodly self-murderers in death (for the Jews, they were martyrs dying for *kiddush ha-Shem*). Yet, the descriptions of events in the Rhineland appear to exceed this medieval ritual. Especially in Germany, suicides were dragged to a ditch for burial or were burned. Mutilations of bodies were not practiced.⁴⁸ Medieval ritual, therefore, does not fully explain the brutality of attackers' search for money.

Our sources suggest: (1) that crusaders may have been suspicious that Jews hid valuable possessions even inside their bodies, and (2) a desire to punish, to choose Albert of Aachen's term. What triggered this thinking and inspired the formats of violence?

Crusading propaganda provides an answer. According to Guibert of Nogent, Urban implored his listeners to think of the suffering of the Christian pilgrims. On every mile of the way, Muslims wanted their money. If they refused to pay, "the prefects of the Gentiles, according to their custom, urged them fiercely with blows." Pilgrims had to choose between paying or being beaten to death. When poor pilgrims had no money to offer even when tortured, the suspicious Muslims

mainly expulsion. See Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 143-153. Nor did the holy campaign of the Spanish *Reconquista* produce the type of violence seen in 1096. Pope Alexander II's admonition against Jewish violence certainly helped. See again Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness," 919; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 150, 161. Perhaps also helpful was the lack of preaching in the style and intensity of the propaganda of the First Crusade.

⁴⁷ Trier Jews gave as bribe "even the praying cloak [*talit*] on their shoulders." Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 471-473; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 288-289.

⁴⁸ Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages. Volume 2, The Curse on Self-Murder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 23-34, 36-37. The St. Alban's author provides an exceptional positive designation for the Jewish victims, Eva Haverkamp, "What did the Christians Know? Latin Reports on the Persecutions of Jews in 1096," *Crusades* vol. 7 (2008), 74.

not only demanded money, which is not an unendurable punishment, but also examined the callouses of their heels, cutting them open and folding the skin back, lest, perchance, they have sewed something there. Their unspeakable cruelty was carried on even to the point of giving them scammony to drink until they vomited, or even *burst their bowels* (*etiam eruptionem eos vitalium*), because they thought the wretches had *swallowed gold or silver*; or horrible to say, *they cut their bowels open with the sword and spreading out the folds of the intestines*, with frightful mutilation disclosing whatever nature held there in secret. Remember, I pray, the thousands who have perished vile deaths....⁴⁹

Descriptions of greed served to demonstrate the crueler customs of the Muslims. Muslims were thought to have demonstrated their desire to punish Christians and humiliate Christianity “as much as is in their power.”

Robert the Monk’s account conveys the same papal message: the deadly torturing of Christians was intended to punish:

When they wish to punish (*multare*) people by an unsightly death, they perforate (*perforant*) their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines (*caput vitaliorum*), bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth (*extractis visceribus*) the lifeless victim falls prostrate upon the ground.⁵⁰

After the Muslims were done with their brutal search for money, reported Baldric of Dol,

the dead bodies of thy servants *have been given to be food for the birds of the heaven*, the flesh of thy saints unto the beast of the earth (Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20). Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them (Psalm 79:2-3).

Urban labeled such treatment of Christians an “unspeakable degradation.”⁵¹

The accuracy of these Latin reports is beside the point. What is telling is the Christian perception of the Muslims’ brutal habits and their malicious treatment of Christians in order to disgrace them. Various Western Christians found the propaganda images credible and enraging. And when they encountered the Jews, they found them also inspiring. Did the assailants

⁴⁹ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 116, my emphasis. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 36-37. Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 112; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 34.

⁵⁰ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727, Peters, *The First Crusade*, 27.

⁵¹ Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:14; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 31, my emphasis.

really expect to find gold and silver hidden in Jewish bodies? The Hebrew narratives never made this charge explicitly. But perhaps this is what the Hebrew narratives implied when saying that Rachel hid the quivering bodies of her children *e'tzel me'eyah*, literally at her intestines, as the information about her grieving husband, who threw himself on his sword and "his intestines (*me'eyav*) flowed forth and he writhed in blood *on the road*," indicates.⁵² Thus understood, the crusaders expected to find money in Rachel's intestines, just as the Muslims expected to uncover money in Christian pilgrims' entrails on the road. When crusaders found Rachel's true "treasure"—her children—they killed her. This image complements stories pertaining to ripping open women and men in the Hebrew accounts, Meshulam's poem, and the *Annalista Saxo*.

Taken together, a picture of crusaders examining bodies in search of money emerges from the Hebrew reports. This brutal form of money hunting, however, should not eclipse the crusaders' grander aspiration: a desire to reverse their perception of defeat by inflicting on the Jews the same type of "punishment"—namely, humiliation—Muslims were thought to inflict on Christians.

Fulcher of Chartres described what crusaders had done when they discovered the Muslims' "cleverness" in swallowing money.

Our squires and *poorer* people split the bellies of those dead Saracens, so that they might pick out besants from their intestines, which they had swallowed down their horrible gullets while alive. After several days, *they made a great heap of their bodies* and burned them to ashes, and in these ashes they found the gold more easily.⁵³

Fulcher's account reveals two points: crusaders did believe that the practice of hiding money inside bodies existed. After all, Urban had accused Muslims of attributing this hiding method to Christian pilgrims, perhaps a projection of a belief among Christians. Second, crusaders were eager to get even with Muslims by giving them a taste of their own medicine. That

⁵² Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 359; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 259. The term appears also in the story of Samuel bar Mordechai to indicate "his intestines." Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 367; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 241.

⁵³ "*ventres eorum iam mortuorum findebant, ut de intestinis eorum bisantios exciperent, quos vivi faucibus diris transglutiverant. Quapropter post dies aliquot, acervo magno de cadaveribus facto et cinere tenuis combusto, aurum memoratum in eodem cinere facilius repperunt.*" Fulcher of Chartres, in Hagenmeyer, *Fulcheri Carnotensis*, 301-302. Besants are gold coins.

greediness alone was not the issue is the point in the account of the fight over Antioch. When the crusaders heard about the burial of Muslims along with their possessions, they

came in haste to that devil's chapel, and ordered the bodies [of the Muslims] to be dug up and the tombs destroyed, and the *dead men dragged out of their graves*. They threw all the corpses into a pit, and cut off their heads and brought them to our tents so that they could count the number exactly, except for those that they loaded on to four horses belonging to the ambassadors of the emir of Cairo and sent to the seacoast.⁵⁴

This report underscores the treatment of the enemy's bodies. It is evocative of the accusations against Muslims in Urban's speech. It was now the crusaders' turn to recover their pickings—and more importantly, their pride—by leaving the Muslims' nude bodies exposed for all to see and for the beasts and birds to eat.

But before crusaders could repay Muslims for their alleged humiliating mutilations, they met first the Jews of Europe. For the crusaders, then, it was not important just to extract money from the Jews, however beneficial this money may have been in supporting their pilgrimage. Jewish money had to be extorted publicly in the same manner that crusading propaganda ascribed to the theo-economic exploitation of Christians by Muslims. The Jewish "punishment" was made to match the Christian perception of "unendurable punishment." By punishment, both the Hebrew and Latin accounts meant also humiliation.

In Trier, the "murderers" reportedly committed such acts with a great deal of satisfaction, as they were commending themselves for the "killing and destruction." A more general Hebrew statement claims that from the outset crusaders "taunted us from every direction." According to the *Gesta Treverorum*, the Jews preferred to destroy themselves and stabbed their children to avoid the disdain (*ludibrio*) that the Christians' abuses would call forth.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Gesta Francorum*, 42, my emphasis. Also, when some crusaders at Antioch "could not satisfy their needs... they ripped up the bodies of the dead, because they used to find besants hidden in their entrails." 80.

⁵⁵ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 473, Chazan, *European Jewry*, 288-289. For Trier see Robert Chazan, "The Trier Unit of the Lengthy Hebrew First Crusade Narrative," *Between History and Literature: Studies in Honor of Isaac Barzilay*, ed. Stanley Nash (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1997), 37-49; idem, "Christian and Jewish Perceptions of 1096: A Case Study of Trier," *Jewish History* 13:2 (1999), 9-22; Eva Haverkamp,

Looting and leaving the victims' bodies naked in the streets, "as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth," gave the attackers a great sense of victory. Crusaders thus treated Jewish bodies as corpses of self-defeated self-murderers rather than as those of God's martyrs. This approach manifested itself throughout the crusade. While crusaders revered their fallen comrades as "Christian martyrs" and labored to bury them "with as much honor as could be managed," they "hastened to despoil the corpses" of the Muslims. Looting and its outcome served to celebrate a divine victory. "Who could possibly describe the rich pickings of clothes and the sheer amount of gold and silver they found? . . . Those who were poor suddenly found themselves rich *with the help of God*; before they were half naked, now they were dressed in silken garments."⁵⁶ Extortion of Jewish possessions constituted a sign of divine involvement and victory.⁵⁷ In the larger context of the events, looting assumed a clear religious, if not ritualistic, meaning, resembling the Christian perceptions of Muslim violence.

The Hebrew accounts put the looting of Jewish possessions in the same religious context found in the Latin descriptions of Muslims looting Christians. "By the sword, pillage and fire" the Muslims desired to eliminate the "pauper" and "depopulate" Christian lands. Similarly, Solomon bar

"'Persecutio' und 'Gezerah in Trier während des Ersten Kreuzzugs," *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp. Vorträge und Forschungen, Bd. 47 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999), 35-71. Taunting: Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 259; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 225. *Gesta Treverorum*, MGH S. VIII:190.

⁵⁶ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III, book III, ch. XV, my emphasis; Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk's*, 112. A similar statement exists in the *Gesta Francorum*: "If God wishes we will become rich today," 19-20. For veneration of martyrs in Germany, see Haverkamp, "Martyrs in rivalry," 327.

⁵⁷ In the name of God Peter the Hermit extorted from Jews. According to Guibert of Nogent, in the cities and towns outside Gaul, Peter "was very liberal in the distributing to the poor of what he had received. . . . For in whatever he did or said it seems as if there was something divine (*subdivinum*). . . ." Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 121; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 103. Ekkehard of Aura mentioned Peter's celestial letter in "Hierosolymita," *RHC Oc.* V:40. In the cities outside Gaul, Peter extracted money from the Jews. Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 471; Tyerman, *God's War*, 95. Jean Flori, *Pierre l'ermite et la première croisade* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 271. Urban allegedly had promised those short of money that "divine compassion will take care of the deficit" (*ac si ei denariorum deesset copia, divina ei satis daret misericordia*). Petrus Tudebodus, *Historia De Hierosolymitano Itinere*, ed. John H. Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Paris, Paul Geuthner, 1977), 32. Or, "The possessions of the enemy, too, will be yours, since you will make spoil of their treasures and return victorious to your own." Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:15. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 32.

Samson's accounts reported that crusaders "plundered and ravaged" the Jewish community of Worms. Eliezer bar Nathan chose to write, "the enemies . . . robbed them and killed." Often, therefore, no distinction exists in the Hebrew narratives between plunder and murder, between greed and creed.⁵⁸

The Hebrew narratives also expressed the crusaders' desire to eliminate the "remnant of Israel" by pillage metaphorically. The destruction in Mainz was compared to the "pillage" of a tent. The attackers are generically designated "the robber" (*ha-shoded*), even when the term explicitly refers to killing. These attackers "devoured Israel with a greedy mouth (Isa. 9:11)." They devoured "the souls of the innocent poor" (Jer. 2:34). Reminiscent of the robbing-motifs in Urban's descriptions of Christian suffering, crusaders "robbed" Jews of their lives, religion, and dignity in the Hebrew accounts. Solomon bar Samson, therefore, could only wish that God would save the survivors from total destruction, which he analogizes as "rapine and captivity . . . among the nations."⁵⁹

Similar metaphors emerge in the Hebrew poetry pertaining to these events. A poem by Rabbi Menachem bar Makir generalizes that the attackers "rejected ransom and destroyed (*hamsu*) souls." *Hamsu* means they destroyed, injured, and plundered. The *Annales S. Disibodi* also describes all these acts of violence against the Jews by a single word: *diripiebantur*. Primarily, the *Annales S. Disibodi* used the word to portray crusaders tearing Jews to pieces. But the word could also mean plunder, ravage, and seizing. Similarly to *hamsu*, *diripiebantur* implies that the crusaders not only tore Jews to pieces but also plundered, destroyed, and seized. Evocative of Urban's understanding of Muslim pillage of Christian pilgrims is Menachem's presentation of the financial exploitation: another crusader endeavor to destroy and humiliate Judaism.⁶⁰

Eliezer bar Nathan well captured these motifs in his poem "God! Villains Have Risen Against Us."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Urban's view according to Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 27. Solomon's view in Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 269; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 245.

⁵⁹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 349; Eidelberg, *The Jews*, 84; Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 345: "when will the robber come"; Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 269: "devoured Israel"; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 245; Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 339: "the innocent poor"; Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 443; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 283.

⁶⁰ Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 63; *Annales S. Disibodi*, MGH S. 17:16. *Diripiebantur* with *occidebantur* (they killed), stresses its multi-meaning.

⁶¹ Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 87, my emphasis.

They [the assailants] shed their [Jews'] blood like water without mercy⁶²
 They assaulted, robbed, and piled them up for contempt
 They joined them together and dragged them without burial
 Behold, O Lord, and see, *how abject I have become* (Lam. 1:11).

Telling is Eliezer's play on words: they assaulted them (*shelahum*) could also mean they robbed them (*shalhu yad*). They piled them up (*he'erimum*) could also imply they stripped them naked and they deceived them. This stanza summarizes a process of the antagonists making deceitful promises of protection before robbing, killing, abusing naked bodies, and denying them burial in order to debase. Those previously "half naked" Christians could now leave Jewish corpses naked in the streets. What inspired the forms of this pillage and killing were the images of Christian pilgrims falling prey to Muslims in crusading propaganda and the vital need to feel victorious.

Sacred Sites

The crusaders' treatment of synagogues and religious artifacts further demonstrates their violent displacement of intended targets. In Cologne, for instance, the crusaders are reported to have looted both personal and public possessions. They broke into houses, "taking spoil and seizing booty" (Isa. 10:6; Ezek. 38:12). They also destroyed the synagogue and took out the Torah scrolls. Outside the synagogue, they "tormented" the Torah scrolls and "gave them over to 'trampling in the streets.'" The Torah was "torn and burned and the evil and wicked trampled it."⁶³

Attacks on synagogues often took place because Jews could be found there praying for their safety or celebrating their holidays. But the physical destruction of sacred objects reveals also a desire to humiliate Judaism and its sacred symbols. Like the human victims, the Torah was seized, tormented, torn, and tarnished. Looting and destroying communal property convey a desire for power and control, and lack of it for the Jews. As the Jewish narrator lamented, "even the holy Torah did not protect those who studied it."⁶⁴

⁶² Baldric of Dol used a similar line in his version of Urban's speech.

⁶³ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 403. A similar scene took place in Worms, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 269.

⁶⁴ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 315; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 252.

On at least one occasion the assailants reportedly intended not only to devastate synagogues but also to convert them into churches. The plan to eliminate Jews by conversion would suggest that the same outcome was designed for synagogues. The intention to convert the synagogue in Mainz is the explanation given as to why Isaac ben R. David set it on fire. Isaac and his friend Uri planned to do so, "for they had heard that the enemy and the burghers intended to make and build out of it a church or a mint."⁶⁵ Significant are the two possible outcomes for the synagogue in Mainz. Obviously, converting the synagogue into a church would have been a double blow. Yet, the second outcome was not without religious connotation either. A mint would produce coins bearing religious Christian symbols.⁶⁶ Creed and currency are fused in this report as well. Either outcome presented a great offence to Judaism. Here, both Jews and synagogues escaped forced conversion by self-destruction.

The treatment of synagogues further buttresses the suggestion that crusading propaganda inspired the nature of these offensives. One of the main goals of Urban's crusade was to rescue Jerusalem, for "Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."⁶⁷ Another ecclesiastical and popular rationale for launching the First Crusade was the perception of Muslim mistreatment of Christian consecrated sites. Eastern Christians were believed to have suffered misery and disgrace by the "unclean races" in the holy places. Urban appeared to be greatly concerned with the state of churches. He lamented that "more suffering of our brethren and devastation of churches remain than we can speak of one by one, for we are *oppressed* by tears and groans, sighs and sobs. . . . the *Holy Temple* have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps."⁶⁸ "They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness."⁶⁹ "To our disgrace" (*ad ignominiam nostram*), Urban admitted this "pollution of paganism." By taking over holy sites and robbing them of the offerings and

⁶⁵ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 381, 383; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 265. See also Jeremy Cohen, "Gezerot Tatnu," 189.

⁶⁶ Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage: The Early Middle Ages (5th-10th Centuries)* 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 51-52, 65, 139, 145 for discussions on Christ's image on coins, for instance.

⁶⁷ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 112; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 34.

⁶⁸ Baldric of Dol, 14. Peters, 31.

⁶⁹ Robert the Monk, III:727; Peters, 27.

alms, the “Turks violently . . . scoffed much and often at your religion” (*ibi nimirum multas et innumeras religioni nostrae ingerunt irrisiones*).⁷⁰

To add insult to injury, the Muslims purportedly destroyed and converted churches into Islamic houses of worship. The Muslims, preached Urban, “have either entirely destroyed the churches of God or turned them over to the rites of their own religion” (*aut suorum ritui sacrorum mancipaverit*).⁷¹ Baldric has Urban saying,

The churches in which divine mysteries were celebrated in olden times are now, to our sorrow, used as stables for the animals of these people. Holy men do not possess those cities; nay, base and bastard Turks hold sway over our brothers. The blessed Peter first presided as Bishop at Antioch; behold, in his own church *the Gentiles have established their superstitions*, and the Christian religion, which they ought rather to cherish, they have basely shut out from the hall dedicated to God. The estates given for the support of the saints and the patrimony of nobles *set aside for the sustenance of the poor are subjected to pagan tyranny*. . . . The sanctuary of God (*unspeakable shame!*) is everywhere profaned.⁷²

Crusaders overcame such mortifying feelings of servitude by attacking Jews. Crusaders and their supporters could get a taste of the victory that would come with the retaking of their sacred sites in the East and the destruction of the Muslims’ sites by letting the propaganda imagery dictate the fate of the Jewish sacred spaces in the Rhineland.

Medieval symbolism added fuel to the attacks. Mainz Jews dubbed their city the glorious Zion, God’s joy (Jer. 49:25). Mainz contained Zion’s “precious children,” the “Temple of our God,” and the “sanctuary . . . in the midst of the nations.” Resembling Urban’s speech, the Hebrew reports lamented the loss of Zion’s (i.e., Mainz’s) glory, the destruction of God’s Temple there (i.e., Mainz’s synagogue), and its sanctuary, which “had distributed untold sums to the poor.”⁷³ Most likely, Christians in Mainz discerned the meanings of these Jewish symbols, because Christians, too,

⁷⁰ Baldric of Dol, 13, my emphasis; Peters, 30.

⁷¹ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727, Peters, *The First Crusade*, 27.

⁷² Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:13; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 30, my emphasis.

⁷³ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 299, 301, 315, 333, 375; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 249, 252, 255, 262. Similar statements by Urban such as, Muslims “now polluted the Holy City and the *glory* of the Sepulcher as much as in their power.” Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 112; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 34; Jerusalem “the city of our glory,” Peters, *The First Crusade*, 296; and the Turks took from the Temple of Solomon the offerings and the alms, Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:13; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 30.

applied the same symbols to their sacred sites in Europe. To support the Episcopal seat of Tarragona, Pope Urban compared the city to Jerusalem. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, "that Jerusalem is Clairvaux." Those who arrived at these sacred sites were compared to pilgrims *en route* to Jerusalem.⁷⁴ With little imagination, therefore, the *peregrine milites sancti Sepulcri*⁷⁵ could have transformed the Temple of Mainz into the anticipated battle for the "Temple of God" in Jerusalem. Calling Mainz Zion served as another reminder that the crusaders' Zion was being polluted and defiled in the East. Before retaking Zion from the Muslims and reconverting its sanctuary, crusaders and townspeople took first "Zion" from the "children of Jerusalem" in Mainz to "reconvert" the "sanctuary" into a church. Symbolism further explains the assailants' distinctive treatment of Mainz synagogue and the attention it received in the Hebrew accounts.

Baptism and Butchery

According to the Hebrew accounts, the main goal of the attacks against the Jews was to eliminate Judaism by butchery or baptism. Initially attempts were made to persuade Jews to join Christianity in order to avoid violence. These attempts involved religious arguments and/or appeals to reason. Crusaders and townspeople argued that God no longer wished to save Jews and that the time had come for them to join the church. On other occasions arguments were made that conversion offered the only practical means of survival, not only for Jews but also for the towns in which they resided.⁷⁶ The public display of Jewish bodies served to make the Jewish defeat more perceptible and the need for conversion more pressing.⁷⁷ These

⁷⁴ Urban II, "Epistolae et privilegia," *Patrologiae cursus sompletus, Series Latina*, comp. ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1864), 151, n. 20, cols. 302-3; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. J. Leclercq (Rome, 1957-1977), vol. 7 Ep. 64, 158.

⁷⁵ As Robert the Monk called the crusaders, *RHC Oc.* III:746, 747.

⁷⁶ That was the case in Worms according to Bernold of St. Blasien. *Chronicon*, *MGH S.* V:464-465.

⁷⁷ All the city dwellers of Worms reportedly implored Mistress Minna to "see and know that God does not wish to save you, for 'they [the Jews] lie naked at the corner of every street' (Isa. 51:20), without a grave; sully [i.e., baptize] yourself." Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 289; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 231. Similarly, Rabbi Simkhah ha-Cohen was ordered to convert because "behold, all of them have already been killed and lie naked." Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 287; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 231. This practice appears to have yielded some results. At Worms, the Jews were killed, dragged through the streets, stripped naked, and

arguments appear to intensify as the devastation unfolded in the Rhineland. Often, a Jewish refusal to comply resulted in torture and executions, unless the Jews opted first for self-destruction.⁷⁸ Other instances, however, lack the choice of conversion or death. Instead, Jews were dragged to the baptismal water to be forcibly converted.

Of all the different forms of conversion, the latter represents the most unusual method of forced conversion.⁷⁹ To mention a few examples, in Moers some Jews were killed, while others were baptized against their will. Also significant here is that the crusaders did not act alone. The townspeople gathered the Jews and delivered them for mass forced baptism. In Regensburg the crusaders and the “common folks” forcibly baptized the entire Jewish community in the Danube. In Trier, bishop’s Egilbert’s “ministers” grasped the Jewish women by their hands “with a great force”; smitten and wounded, they were led with their children to the church to be baptized. Forced baptism was a part of an elaborate plot, because “they

left unburied. When the survivors “saw their brethren naked and the modest daughters of Israel naked, they then acceded to them [the crusaders] under great duress... There were those who said: ‘Let us do their will for the time being, and let us go and bury our brethren and save the children from them.’” The survivors are also said to have “sent garments with which to clothe those who had been killed through those who had been saved.” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 283-285; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 229.

⁷⁸ “The enemy gathered together against the saintly ones... in order to torture them with great and terrible tortures until they agreed to baptism. The matter became known to the pious ones. They confessed before their Creator and they volunteered and chose for themselves five pious and saintly ones... who would slaughter all the others.” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 427; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 278.

⁷⁹ On the problem of conversion for Jews and Christians see Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness;” Jeremy Cohen, “Between Martyrdom and Apostasy: Doubt and Self-Definition in Twelfth-Century Ashkenaz,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999), 431-471; Friedrich Lotter, “‘Tod oder Taufe’. Das Problem der Zwangstaufen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs,” in *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. A. Haverkamp, Vorträge und Forschungen, Bd. 47 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1999), 107-152; Alfred Haverkamp, “Baptised Jews in German Lands during the Twelfth Century,” in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, eds. M.A. Michael, A. Singer, and J. Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press 2001), 255-310; Shmuel Shepkaru, “Death Twice Over: Dualism of Metaphor and Realia in 12th-Century Hebrew Crusading Accounts,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 93 (2002): 217-256. According to Eva Haverkamp, it is possible that the Xanten martyrs were first baptized. Haverkamp, “Martyrs in rivalry,” 324, 334.

did not wish to kill them; instead, they endeavored to seize them and forcibly convert them.”⁸⁰ The *Annales Augustani* also mentions forced baptism. In most cities “the Jews were forced into baptism, or destroyed, or killed themselves.”⁸¹

How can this extreme form of forced conversion be explained? Did the assailants expect forced baptism to produce genuine Christians? Once again, crusading propaganda provides a possible answer. Urban reportedly asserted that Muslims attacked and killed the Christians of the East because of their Christian belief. His generation lived to witness the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy that the Antichrist “will first kill three kings of Egypt, Africa, and Ethiopia, without doubt for their Christian faith.” The three kings and the Antichrist symbolized the situation Christians endured in the East. Christian lands “have withdrawn from the communion of our belief;” the time had come to “[re]include within His law Egypt, Africa, and Ethiopia.”⁸² This message created the impression that Christians had ceased living in the Holy Land because Muslims had killed them for their faith.

Baldric’s version held the Christian victims martyrs. Urban’s designation of the victims as “saints” and “servants” intimates that they died martyrs, because they had refused to accept Islam. To further associate the victims’ death with martyrdom, their saintly designation is immediately followed by a reminder that

This land we have deservedly called holy in which there is not even a footstep that the body or spirit of the Savior did not render glorious and blessed, which embraced the holy presence of the mother of God, and the meetings of the apostles, and drank up the blood of the martyrs shed there. How blessed are the stones which crowned you,

⁸⁰ “Did not wish to kill them” in Trier, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 479, Chazan, *European Jewry*, 292; in Moers, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 445-449, Chazan, *European Jewry*, 284; in Regensburg, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 481; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 293; forced baptism in Worms, Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 277; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 245. On Regensburg see also Joseph Hacker, “On the Persecutions of 1096” (Hebrew), *Zion* 31 (1996), 229-231.

⁸¹ *MGH S. III*:134. See also the “*Annales Hildesheimenses*,” *MGH S.*, VIII:49-50 (Hannover: Monumenta Germaniae, 1878). Cosmas of Prague, *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prague* (Berlin: B. Bretholz, 1923), 164-166.

⁸² Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 114-115; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 35.

Stephen, the first martyr! How happy, O John the Baptist, the waters of the Jordan which served you in baptizing the Savior!⁸³

Present Christian suffering is associated with martyrdom. The blood of the old Christian martyrs, including that of Christ, was now mingling anew with the fresher blood of Christian “saints” in the Holy Land. Such martyrological nuances created the perception that Muslims were attempting to forcibly convert Christians. As a result, “the priesthood of God has been ground down into the dust. . . . Whatever Christians still remain in hiding there *are sought out with unheard of tortures*” (*exquiruntur tormentis*).⁸⁴ Muslims emerge determined to find the remaining Christians and torture them to enforce their conversions.

The conversion of Christians through torture is addressed more forcefully in Robert the Monk’s account. Some Christians are said to have been destroyed by “cruel tortures.” The Muslims “*compelled others to extend their necks* and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow.”⁸⁵ “Extended their necks” evokes old Christian martyrologies.⁸⁶

More significantly, Robert the Monk reported that the Muslims did not always wait for torture to yield results. They “*circumcise the Christians (Christianos circumcidunt), and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font.*”⁸⁷ A more elaborate accusation of forced circumcision is provided by the so-called Emperor Alexius Comnenus’ letter to Robert, Count of Flanders. Of the “many evils” committed by the Petchenegs and Turks on the eve of the First Crusade, the letter focuses on the following conduct:

they *circumcise Christian boys and youths above Christian baptismal fonts*, pour the blood from circumcision into the fonts *in mockery of Christ*, force them to blaspheme the name and faith of the Holy Trinity. Those who refuse are subjected to various punishments and eventually killed.⁸⁸

⁸³ Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:14; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 31. Jesus as the suffering servant in Matt. 12:15-21; Acts 8:32-35; John 12:37-38.

⁸⁴ Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV:13. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 30.

⁸⁵ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727-728. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 27.

⁸⁶ *Gesta Francorum*, 4; Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, 35-36.

⁸⁷ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727. My emphasis.

⁸⁸ “*Nam pueros et iuvenes Christianorum circumcidunt super baptisteria Christianorum et circumcisionis sanguinem in despectum Christi fundunt in eisdem baptisteriis et desuper eos*

Of course, circumcision alone did not satisfy the Islamic requirements for conversion. Nor did circumcision disqualify a man from being a Christian. But stories of forced circumcision further contributed to a perception that Muslims forcibly converted Christians, going to great lengths to inflict upon them humiliating tortures in the process.⁸⁹ The main reason for circumcising Christian youths, spilling their blood into the baptismal fonts, and forcing them to blaspheme, was to mock Christianity and Christians. Muslims do not appear interested in the sincerity of the forced converts according to these reports.

Once again, crusaders reversed such degrading feelings by attacking the Jews. The desire to convert Jews marks this symbolic reversal and constitutes a seeming motivation for religious-based attacks in 1096. But what these religious-based attacks satisfied was not a theological requirement or even a distorted theological view. The format of these attacks exhibits the assailants' desire to instantly gratify their need to compensate for their frustrations and anger. Obviously, the crusaders did not expect compulsorily baptized Jews to become loyal Christians.⁹⁰ Nor did they seem to care. If forced baptism could not produce genuine converts, it could at least give crusaders, local common folks, and townsfolk, the satisfaction of humiliating others in order to relieve their own such feelings.⁹¹

mingere compellunt et deinceps in circuitu ecclesiae eos uiolenter deducunt et nomen et fidem sanctae Trinitatis blasphemare compellunt. Illos uero nolentes ea diuersis poenis adfligunt et ad ultimum eos interficiunt." Hagenmeyer, Heinrich. *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes. Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 131. My emphasis.

⁸⁹ Events in Muslim Cordova in the ninth century reveal the Christian sensitivity to circumcision. Even voluntary circumcision of Christians was seen as capitulation to Islam and as a mark of disgrace. Jessica A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Cordoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 58, 82–83; 87–88.

⁹⁰ Guibert of Nogent reported with great pleasure how a French Jew genuinely converted to Christianity, "which in our days is unusual," after the crusaders' massacre in Rouen in 1096. Benton, *Self and Society*, 137.

⁹¹ According to Stow, these forced conversions and the insincere Christians they created greatly disturbed the Christian Chroniclers. Stow writes: "Albert, Ekkehard, and the other Christian chroniclers were furious with Emicho and those like him for having contravened the law—to be precise, the fundamental legal and theological axiom of freely chosen faith on which the whole of Christian belief rested—and in the process having created a body of unbelieving Christians and ultimately apostates." "*Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness*," 927.

Conclusion and Commencement

Jewish reports of crusaders' violence parallel the descriptions of Muslims' violent behavior in the contemporary Latin accounts. How can these parallels be explained? Shared literary styles may explain some of the parallels in the Jewish and Christian descriptions of the violence against their people. Nevertheless, the non-Jewish accounts often confirm the information in the Jewish accounts. This confirmation reinforces the conclusion that the analogous vocabulary and descriptions did not result only from a shared literary style. Rather, the Hebrew accounts employed a common style and a set of symbolic stories to describe actual events to the best of their ability.

The parallelism between the idiosyncratic manifestations of the violence against the Jews and Christian descriptions of Muslims' hostility toward Christians in crusade propaganda calls to mind the psychological theory of displacement.⁹² According to John H. Duckitt, the "frustration-aggression-displacement theory proposes that aggression which cannot be expressed directly against a source of frustration may be inhibited and displaced onto a convenient substitute or scapegoat."⁹³ The process commences with a

⁹² Without denying the difficulties in applying modern theories to historical events (it would be equally difficult to prove that the parallels only represent a shared literary device. Did the Jewish authors read the Latin sources?), I believe, some fundamental human characteristics can stimulate near-universal behaviors. The theory of displacement is obviously modern, but the phenomenon it describes is not. The comparable examples of violent behaviors, therefore, indicate, that among the possible stimuli for the attacks against the Jews, an urge to displace played a role in the massacres of the Jews in 1096.

⁹³ John H. Duckitt, *The Social Psychology of Prejudice* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1992), 71, and see also 52-53, 62-64, 90, 102-104, 149-150. Treatments of displacement often open with references to René Girard's philosophical anthropological approach to violence. According to Girard's general hypothesis, "any community that has fallen prey to violence or has been stricken by some overwhelming catastrophe hurls itself blindly into the search for a scapegoat. Its members instinctively seek an immediate and violent cure for the onslaught of unbearable violence..." Girard's definition, however, is too general for our case. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 84, and see his discussion in chapters 1 and 10, and *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), especially, 1-23, 198-221. Other consulted works are: John Dollard, Neal E. Miller et al., *Frustration and Aggression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); *Error Without Trial: Psychological Research on Antisemitism*. Current research on Antisemitism, ed. Werner Bergmann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 2:12-21, 39; Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993), 77-78, 265-266; idem, *Aggression: a Social Psychological*

situation that stimulates anger and anger tends to generate aggressive energy. When this energy is blocked and cannot be expressed, frustration accumulates. Frustration, therefore, occurs due to “the blocking of a sequence of goal directed acts” and perceptions of “arbitrariness and injustice.”⁹⁴ Such feelings instigate further anger, lowering the threshold for aggression. When frustration mounts due to the inability to retaliate against the sources of anger, the “tendency to aggress must somehow be drained, and what is needed is a suitable target, preferably one that cannot retaliate. The anger is therefore displaced from the original source of frustration to a target that is unlikely to strike back, one that is not a part of the ingroup, i.e., a scapegoat.”⁹⁵

Two characteristics of displacement in particular are valuable to this study. First, each aggressive act releases pressure, which has built up through frustration. This hydraulic model expects the amount of aggression to be *directly related* to the amount of cumulated inner energy. Second, “aggressive behaviour tends to increase or intensify *when examples of aggressive behaviour in others are plentifully available*.” Displacement may also be catharsis, although violent expressions of displacement are also repetitive. One act of displacement may bring temporary satisfaction, but does not necessarily bring the desire to aggress to an end.⁹⁶

In the context of the Jewish massacres, the preexisting “many reports,” Urban’s message, and the graphic examples of the alleged Muslims’ atrocities in crusade propaganda provided the stimulus to aggress immediately. But the geographical distance between West and East blocked the assailants’ impulse to retaliate instantly. An alternative outlet for the accumulating frustration was found in the nearby Jews. As the sources indicate, not

Analysis (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1962), especially chapter 6. Dolf Zillmann, *Hostility and Aggression* (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1979), 120-144 and chapter 6. Freud, Anna, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York, NY: International Universities Press, 1967). Langmuir briefly mentioned displacement in his general discussion, but did not apply it to the events of 1096. *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, 322, 338.

⁹⁴ Tom Douglas, *Scapegoats: Transferring Blame* (London: Routledge, 1995), 112, and additionally, chapters 4-7.

⁹⁵ Arnold H. Buss, *The Psychology of Aggression* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1961), 246, 248, and for more on the subject see 60-70, 245-264.

⁹⁶ As a defense mechanism, displacement frees the aggressor from a sense of helplessness, endowing a sense of purpose and control, creates solidarity within the group, and exonerates the aggressor from any blame, related and unrelated to the victim. Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 115 (my emphasis).

only the so-called popular crusaders participated in this process. By displacing their anger to the Jews, the attackers—members of the nobility (like Emicho), the crusaders (“the marked pilgrims”), “the unmarked pilgrims,” and some of the Jews’ neighbors—could temporarily and partially satisfy their urge to aggress.⁹⁷ Thus villagers and townspeople could have participated in the crusade without leaving their homes, fulfilling in their minds the obligation of assisting in the crusade.⁹⁸ Striving to rectify their perceptions of defeat and put Christianity in a renewed position of power sanctioned by God, the assailants modeled their violence against Jews on the images of Muslim oppression in crusade propaganda. By shifting their attention from the intimidating and distant Muslims to their defenseless Jewish neighbors, the assailants could restore their sense of honor and heroism, pride and power, and the belief that God was on their side once again. Through the Jewish prelude, victorious armed pilgrims could present themselves as an alternative to the image of the victimized pilgrims.

This mechanism of violence is captured by the parallel examples of Christian atrocities against Jews and of Muslims’ against Christians in the Hebrew and Latin accounts, respectively. Analogous terminology and phraseology in the Hebrew narratives were designed to show that, by attacking Jews, Christians were guilty of the same crimes they had ascribed to Muslims.⁹⁹ According to Robert the Monk, Urban lamented the

⁹⁷ A similar desire to displace anger to a reachable target emerges in the following example: “It is now winter, *we cannot now go overseas* [my emphasis]... But we can do a good thing!... There is a city near here, Zara is its name. Those of that city have done wrong to me, and I and my men would like to avenge ourselves, if we can... And the city of Zara is very fine and very full of all good things.” Throop gives this example in a different context of vengeance. *Crusading as an Act of Vengeance*, 25.

⁹⁸ The attackers circulated the message that “anyone who kills one Jew will have all his sins forgiven.” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 261; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 226. According to Raymond of Aguilers, Jesus himself promised in a vision a place in the hierarchy of heaven to those who assist the crusaders. See Shepkaru, “To Die for God: Martyrs’ Heaven in Hebrew and Latin Crusade Narratives,” *Speculum* 77 (2002), 322. Although not referring to Jews, the vision is indicative of the notion that the non-participants must assist the crusaders in different ways. This sits well with Throop’s general observation that medieval social and religious codes required faithful Christians to assist in the act of vengeance. Throop, *Crusading as an Act of Vengeance*, 57-65.

⁹⁹ The Spaniard Judah ha-Levi (c. 1075-1141) made a similar association: “Christian and Muslims fight with one another, each of them serving his God with pure intention... committing murders...” Judah ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, trans. Hartwig Hirschfeld (New York, NY: Schocken Books 1964), part 1, s. 2, 39.

hardship inflicted by “an accursed race,” and the lost Holy Sepulcher, which was “possessed by unclean nations . . . polluted with their filthiness.”¹⁰⁰ In Baldric of Dol’s version, “barbarous nations placed their idols” in the Temple of Solomon, and the “holy temple have they defiled.”¹⁰¹

Solomon bar Samson called the crusaders the “arrogant, ‘the barbaric’ (Ps. 114:1), or ‘a fierce and impetuous people’ (Hab. 1:6),” who desired to travel to the Holy City, “which had been defiled by ‘a ruffian people’ (Ezek. 7:22)” in order to rescue the Holy Sepulcher.¹⁰² Referring to the defilement of the Torah scrolls and the synagogue in Cologne, Eliezer bar Nathan and Solomon bar Samson, called the attackers “ruffian.”¹⁰³ Thus, Solomon bar Samson applied the term “ruffian” first to Muslims (reminiscent of Urban’s speech), and then to crusaders, as he saw no difference in their violent conduct. What Jews heard about Muslims from Christians and what they witnessed Christians doing to Jews led the Jewish authors to put the two largest Abrahamic religions on a par. Crusaders turned their perception of Muslim violence into a reality for the Jews of Europe. The parallels in the Hebrew narratives show that Western Christians treated their Jewish neighbors in the same way Christians had accused the Muslims of treating their coreligionists in the East.

The anonymous *Annalista Saxo*, therefore, made an accurate observation when saying that the attackers were eager to avenge (*ulcisci*) Christ upon the “*gentilibus*” (a common term in crusading sources for Muslims) *or else (vel)* upon the Jews.¹⁰⁴ Obviously, to avenge Christ in relation to the Muslims did not mean vengeance for the death of Christ.¹⁰⁵ “To avenge

¹⁰⁰ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:727, 728; Peters, 27, 28.

¹⁰¹ Baldric of Dol, 13, 14; Peters, 30, 31.

¹⁰² Haverkamp, 249. See there also the identical description by Eliezer bar Nathan; Eidelberg, 279. Chazan, 243, for Solomon bar Samson.

¹⁰³ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 403; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 274. Eliezer bar Nathan labeled the killers of infants and pregnant women “a nation of fierce countenance that does not respect the old nor show favor to the young.” Haverkamp, 329; Eidelberg, 83. The phrase appears also in his poems, Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 83; 84, for example.

¹⁰⁴ “Hic siquidem habebant in professione ut vellent ulcisci Christum in gentilibus vel Iudeis.” *MGH S.* 6:729. My emphasis. Throop discusses the vocabulary of vengeance in chapter one, *Crusading as an Act of Vengeance*, and, 5-6, 56-57, 70. It is significant that the term that the *Annalista Saxo* used for vengeance upon the Jews is the same term that is often used for vengeance on the Muslims.

¹⁰⁵ According to John V. Tolan, the *La Chanson d’Antioche* did blame the “pagan” Muslims for the crucifixion. *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, 109. Also Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, 55-56, followed by Malkiel, *Reconstructing*

Christ” meant retaliation for the *present* Muslim “crimes” against Christians. If satisfaction could not be achieved instantly, crusaders found temporary relief by redirecting their desire to punish Muslims toward the Jews. Geography forced the crusaders to postpone their first plan, making the nearby Jews a convenient alternative objective.

Reports in the Hebrew accounts of crusaders attacking Jews to avenge Christ’s crucifixion should not undermine our inference that the assailants desired to discharge their anger and frustration with Islam by disgracing Jews. After all, the accusation of killing Christ was not new. Its surfacing in the twelfth-century accounts was not accidental.¹⁰⁶ But rather, than triggering the massacres of 1096, the massacres appear to have given rise to the accusation. The occasional surfacing of the accusation in some of our sources (mainly in twelfth-century Jewish accounts) corresponds with the hypothesis that “the sequence that eventually leads to prejudice is set in motion by any stimulus that induces anger, which is then displaced to members of an outgroup.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, displacement of anger may lead to an increase in prejudice, i.e., Jews as Christ killers in our case, and not vice versa.¹⁰⁸

Given the broad use of “to avenge Christ” in its Christian-Muslim context, it is easy to understand why the Jewish reporters interpreted this

Ashkenaz, 75. In my view, vengeance for the “death of the Father” is a general symbolic expression of vengeance for the ongoing “crimes” against the Christians. This non-historical report reflects the sentiments of its late twelfth-century author. See once more Throop, “Vengeance and the Crusades,” 21-27.

¹⁰⁶ Jeremy Cohen has dealt with this myth in “The Jews as the Killer of Christ in the Latin Tradition, from Augustine to the Friars,” *Traditio* 39 (1983), 1-27. According to Cohen, the accusation became popular in the twelfth century, 11.

¹⁰⁷ Buss, *The Psychology of Aggression*, 247, 250, and 257: prejudice subjects do tend to displace more.

¹⁰⁸ Throop writes: “Again and again the sources suggest a link between crusading and anti-Jewish violence, and again and again the ideas of vengeance and the crucifixion crop up; but it is nevertheless impossible to state concretely, based upon the sources for this period, that the Jews were attacked in 1096 because the First Crusade saw the overall crusade as an act of vengeance.” *Crusading as an Act of Vengeance*, 70. It must be stressed, however, that the stories of the crucifixion and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem were told mainly in the context of the Muslims’ occupation of the Holy Land and their aggression against Christians, not in the context of the Jews as killers of Christ. Throop is correct to say that it is impossible to state concretely that the Jews were attacked in 1096 as revenge for killing Christ. The question, then, is: what motivated men and women to carry out the massacres. Here, I believe, the theory of displacement comes in handy.

slogan as a desire to avenge the historical death of Christ. Vengeance for Christ's death reflects the Jewish narrators' perception and interpretation of the indistinct motto "to avenge Christ."¹⁰⁹ As the accusation of killing Christ became more common in the twelve century, it made sense to them to associate the unexpected attacks with the longstanding Christian accusation.¹¹⁰ It is also possible that the inclusion of the crucifixion was intended to give the devastated Jewish survivors some satisfaction by verifying that the "idoltrous" perpetrators worshiped a dead man killed by Jews.

That revenge for killing Christ mirrors the Jewish narrators' perceptions is reinforced by the claim that Godfrey of Bouillon swore not to leave Europe before "avenging the blood of the crucified [Jesus] with the blood of Israel and that he would not leave a 'remnant or residue' [Jer. 42:17] among those bearing the name Jew." Yet, the same Hebrew account acquits Godfrey of any violent act. Godfrey's alleged change of heart occurred because Emperor Henry forewarned him not to harm the Jews and even instructed him to protect them, after a Jewish emissary from Mainz had informed Henry about Godfrey's violent intentions.¹¹¹ The fact that Henry was at the time in northern Italy makes the account's explanation for Godfrey's change of heart unrealistic.

A description in the Mainz Anonymous also reflects the Jewish perception that the Jews were attacked to avenge Jesus' death. According to the Mainz Anonymous, "God's enemies" attributed the miraculous opening of the gates in Mainz to Jesus' intervention so that his blood could be avenged "upon the Jews." Solomon bar Samson omitted the miracle and "upon the Jews." He has the crusaders saying: "Behold, they [the townspeople] opened the gates for us, now we shall avenge his [Jesus'] blood."¹¹² Albert of Aachen made no mention of a miracle or of the crucifixion in his Mainz report. Although he acknowledged that the Jews were "hostile to Christ," he did not say that the pilgrims slaughtered the Jews to avenge Jesus' death. He did say, however, that the objective of Peter the Hermit

¹⁰⁹ Israel J. Yuval has shown in a number of studies that the Hebrew narratives were more concerned with God's vengeance upon the Christians. "Vengeance and Damnation, Blood and Defamation: From Jewish Martyrdom to Blood Libel Accusations" (in Hebrew) *Zion* 58 (1993), 33-90. This concern mirrors the general atmosphere of vengeance at the time.

¹¹⁰ According to an early response of the Rhineland Jews to their coreligionists in France, they had no reason to fear the approaching crusaders.

¹¹¹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 295-297; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 247.

¹¹² Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 315-317; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 252.

was to avenge the Muslims' crimes against Christendom.¹¹³ Albert was not unique in this respect. Ekkehard of Aura did not mention Christ's crucifixion as a reason for massacring the Jews by those "devoted to the Christian faith." Nor did Frutolf of Michelsberg, who wrote that the crusaders perceived the Jews as the enemy of the Church.¹¹⁴

Guibert of Nogent comes close in his *Monodiae*. He reported that in Rouen crusaders made the following complaint: "we desire to attack the enemies of God [i.e., the Muslims] in the East, although the Jews, of all races the worst foes of God, are before our eyes. That's doing our work backwards."¹¹⁵ Even in the *Monodiae*, where Guibert's unfavorable view of Jews is pronounced, specific blame for the crucifixion is missing. Jews became an opportune target mainly because they were "before our eyes." Guibert's autobiography is more concerned with the present Jewish "threat" to the Christian believer. In his earlier *Dei gesta per Francos*, Guibert had not yet detailed such sentiments. In neither work did he attribute calls for vengeance upon Jews to crusaders' proclamations. But he did see the crusade as vengeance upon Muslims.¹¹⁶

Scholars have pointed out the notable similarities between Guibert's report in *Monodiae* and Solomon bar Samson's following report:¹¹⁷

Behold we [the crusaders] journey a long way to seek the idolatrous shrine and to take vengeance upon the Ishmaelites, while here the Jews are dwelling among us, whose ancestors killed and crucified him unjustly. Let us take vengeance upon them first... or else they shall be like us...¹¹⁸

"Let us take vengeance upon them first... or else..." is reminiscent of the crusaders' plan in the *Annalista Saxo* to take first vengeance on the Muslims or else on the Jews. The Jewish narrator modified the statement to validate his perception that the massacres resulted from the crusaders' desire to avenge the killing of Jesus. The motif helped the author to

¹¹³ *RHC Oc.* IV:292; 272.

¹¹⁴ Ekkehard of Aura, *RHC Oc.* 20; Frutolf of Michelsberg, *Chronica*, in *Frutolfi et Ekkehardi Chronica Anonymi Chronica Imperatorum*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott (Darmstadt, 1972), 108. On Frutolf and other texts see Haverkamp, "What did the Christians Know?", 59-85, 71-72.

¹¹⁵ Translation in John F. Benton, *Self and Society*, 134-135.

¹¹⁶ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 304.

¹¹⁷ Benton, *Self and Society*, 134 n. 1.

¹¹⁸ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 253; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 244.

rationalize the crusaders' inexplicable desire to take vengeance on the Muslim enemy via the protected and peaceable Rhineland Jews. The author is aware that the crusaders' first goal was to take vengeance upon the Muslims. He later cites the assailants' saying: "Behold, these miracles were done by the Crucified before their eyes in order to take vengeance on their *enemies*."¹¹⁹ But he could not find a reasonable explanation for the sudden violence that his co-religionists experienced, except for vengeance for Jesus' death.

This is not the case in his seemingly redundant next ascription.

Why are they [Christians] occupied with doing battle against the Ishmaelites in Jerusalem? Indeed among them is *a people* which does not respect [lit. fear] their idolatry, even though their ancestors crucified their God. Why should we let them live and why should they dwell among us? Let our swords (סייפנו) begin with their heads (בראשם) and then we shall go on the way of our pilgrimage.¹²⁰

This declaration followed Solomon bar Samson's reference to Urban's preaching. For the crusaders the battle around Jerusalem had already started in the Rhineland. The reason given in the second quoted passage differs from the previous one. It is the crusaders' sentiment that European Jews disrespected Christianity (just as the Christian accounts had accused the Muslims of disrespecting Christianity), even though Christians let them live in Christendom after they had crucified Jesus. Here the Jewish "crime" appears to be contempt and ingratitude.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 301; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 249, 233. As noted, the Latin accounts tend to refer to the Muslim enemy in the plural, and the Jews in the singular. The Anonymous does not mention the vengeance motif here.

¹²⁰ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 299; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 248.

¹²¹ Contempt and ingratitude constitute the reasons for the massacres in Bishop Egilbert's view. Egilbert exhorted the Jews of Trier to convert, saying: "Oh Miserable Ones, now turn away from your sins, of which this is the result. *Blaspheming* the son of God and *disgracing* His most holy birth; you have denied that He came to life in the flesh. You have *scorned* his mother with your words. Behold! *Now this is the reason that you have come to this desperate time in your lives*. Therefore, I say to you: if you persist in this faithlessness, you will lose your body as well as your soul." *Gesta Treverorum*, MGH S. 8:190-191 and *Patrologiae cursus completus latina*, eds. Jacques-Paul Migne and Georg Heinrich (1881), 154:1207a-b. Egilbert reiterated Urban's general grievance that Christians became "a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing, and derision to them." Baldric of Dol, *RHC Oc.* IV: 14; Peters, *The First Crusade*, 31.

Solomon bar Samson apparently did sense that the attacks on the Jews signified a prelude to the battle against the Muslims. This is what he may have tried to convey by playing on the words in “Let our swords begin with their heads” (נתחיל בראשם סייפנו). The Aramaic word “sword” (*sayfa*) could also mean conclusion (*seyfa*) and “head” (*rosh*) could additionally mean commencement (*reysa*).¹²² The etymologies of these words make the crusaders announce: “let us arrive at the conclusion of our journey by starting with their heads.” The destruction in the Jewish communities, therefore, constituted the beginning of the crusaders’ attaining their final goal. Thus this account may have suggested that the reason for attacking the Jews did have more to do with a Christian desire to get even with Islam. Although not in a Jewish context, Robert the Monk made a similar observation. Already during the early formation of the crusade in Europe, “the huge might of the Frankish race began to strain at its bounds *and in their minds they were already doing battle ferociously with the Turks*.”¹²³

In reality, however, they were attacking Jews, not Turks. According to Albert of Aachen, an “*error of mind*,” led to “a spirit of cruelty” (*spiritu crudelitatis*) against the Jews. By massacring the Jews, observed Albert, the crusaders were “asserting that this was the beginning of their expedition and obligation against the enemies of the Christian faith.”¹²⁴ Usually the Latin texts address the Muslim enemy in the plural and the Jews as a people in the singular. “The enemies of the Christian faith,” therefore, could mean the Muslims. Put differently, the crusaders and their local collaborators needed no religious excuse to attack the Jews, although anti-Jewish feelings obviously exacerbated the intensity of these attacks as they developed. A religious “reason” for attacking the Jews was provided by the Christian perception that the Muslim actions in the East were motivated by a desire to harm and humiliate Christianity. Excluding Solomon bar Samson’s *interpretation* of Christian vengeance, Solomon, Guibert of

¹²² See Solomon again about the events in Mainz: “The end result proves the initial intention (B. Baba Batra 138a)” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 293. Eliezer bar Nathan applied the same literary motif to describe the assailants’ goals and the Jewish reaction. “They [the attackers] left only a few alive and had their way with them, forcibly immersing them in their filthy waters; *and the later acts of those thus coerced are testimony to this beginning*, for in the end they regarded the object of the enemy’s veneration as no more than slime and dung.” Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 271; Eidelberg, *The Jews*, 81, my emphasis.

¹²³ Robert the Monk, *RHC Oc.* III:731, my emphasis; Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk’s*, 83.

¹²⁴ *RHC, Oc.*, IV:292. Chazan has pointed out the significance of this statement. *European Jewry*, 66-67.

Nogent, the *Annalista Saxo*, Albert of Aachen, and by implication Robert the Monk, all observed that impatient crusaders attacked the Jews to achieve their vicarious victory over their Muslim enemy.¹²⁵

The transition from perceptions of Muslims to persecutions of Jews may not account for all of the wide range of crusaders' behaviors in their attacks on the Jews. However, it does suggest an additional explanation for the assailants' behaviors, and particularly for the unusual practices used to achieve their goals. Christian perceptions of events in the East inspired the crusaders' deliberate and calculated treatment of Jews in the West. Looting, forced conversion and forced baptism of Jews afforded the crusaders instant solace for the alleged looting, killings, forced conversions and forced circumcisions of Christians by Muslims.

Together with the crusaders' call in Guibert's *Monodiae* to harm the Jews before encountering the Muslims, Urban's following statement from Guibert's *Dei gesta* well demonstrates the mindset that led to this dynamic of violence.

Let your memory be moved by what the Lord Himself says to the Church: "I will bring thy *seed from the East* and *gather thee from the West*." God has already brought our seed from the East, since in a double way that region of the East has given the first beginnings of the Church to us. But from the West He will also gather it, provided He repairs the wrongs of Jerusalem through those who have begun the witness of the final faith that is the people of the West. With God's assistance, we think this can be done through you.¹²⁶

Little did the Jews know that the "people of the West" would "repair" the "wrongs of Jerusalem" by destroying first the Jews and their "Zions" in Europe.

By the time Europe was preparing for the Second Crusade, both the Jews and the Christian authorities were fully aware of the nexus between the news about the fall of Edessa and the potential for anti-Jewish violence in the West. According to Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn, Ashkenazic Jews

¹²⁵ This desire to achieve an immediate vicarious victory by attacking the Western Jews may explain why crusaders were more tolerant of the Jews in Palestine, even though the latter fiercely fought the crusaders together with the Muslims. S.D. Goitein, "Geniza Sources for the Crusader Period: A Survey," *Outremer*, ed. Kedar, Mayer and Smail, 308; idem, "contemporary Letters on the Capture of Jerusalem by Crusaders," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 3 (1952), 162-167; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, 55.

¹²⁶ Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta*, 115-116, my emphasis. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 36.

dreaded the news. Their anxiety increased when the Cistercian French monk Rudolf attempted to keep this nexus alive. Rudolf urged his audiences “to go to Jerusalem to fight with the Ishmaelites. Everywhere he came, he spoke ill about all the Jews in the country . . . saying, avenge [first] the retribution of the crucified one on our enemies who stand before you, and then go to fight the Ishmaelites.”¹²⁷

Aware of the impulse to commit violence prematurely, St. Bernard of Clairvaux admonished that the zeal for God’s glory “that burns in your midst” needed to be controlled and used wisely. The Jews, warned Bernard, “must not be persecuted, slaughtered, nor even driven out.” To break the potential explosive nexus between the call for the crusade and anti-Jewish violence, Bernard reminded Christians of their theological responsibility “to vanquish the proud [i.e., Muslims] and also to spare the subjected [i.e., Jews].” Ephraim’s account confirms Bernard’s concerns and intervention.¹²⁸ While Urban is said to have promised crusaders *indulgentia*, which apparently some crusaders hoped to secure by killing a Jew before killing a Muslim,¹²⁹ Bernard explicitly linked Christian salvation to the preservation of the Jews as Jews.

Peter the Venerable, the abbot of Cluny, also expressed the same logic that concerned Ephraim and Bernard. It made no sense to Peter to pursue the “enemies of the Christian faith in far and distant lands while the Jews . . . lived right in our midst . . . totally unpunished.” Peter rejected a physical punishment of the Jews, however. Their lives should be spared, he wrote, but not their money. Although in different ways, both Rudolf and Peter the Venerable believed that European Jews must pay first for the fall of Edessa.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 115.

¹²⁸ Bernard’s letter 365 in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq et al. (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-1977), 8:316. According to Ephraim, Bernard preached: “It is good for you to go [fight] against the Ishmaelites, but whoever touches a Jew to take his life, is like one who harms Jesus himself.” Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 116.

¹²⁹ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 261; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 226. David Berger discusses the positive and negative implications of Bernard’s position in “The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Toward the Jews,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* XL (1972), 89-108.

¹³⁰ Peter the Venerable, *Epistulae* 130, in *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), I:327-330. According to Ephraim, the French King Louis VII adopted the same policy. “Anyone who has volunteered to journey to Jerusalem shall have his debt forgiven, if he is obligated to the Jews,” declared the king. Ephraim in Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 121.

The argument resurfaced on the eve of the Third Crusade. News of the devastating defeat of crusaders at Hittim in 1187 triggered fears of retaliation against European Jews. "See and learn," wrote Ephraim, "what the crusaders desired to do to [the people of] Israel in this country, because a dispute had broken out between the People of Edom [Christens] in Jerusalem...until they gave it to the king of the Ishmaelites.....The news reached the entire country of Edom [Christian Europe], of the people of Jesus, and they rose against God's people to swallow and destroy them."¹³¹ Rabbi Eleazer bar Yehudah noted the same mechanism of defeat and displacement. After the defeat of the Latins in Jerusalem, he wrote, "the news reached all the places in Ashkenaz and all the Gentiles [Christians] told the Jews: 'Behold the day for killing all the Jews has come'.....When we heard this, a very great fear fell upon us."¹³²

According to Ephraim, Jews continued to suffer for the same reason in 1196. "And it came to pass in the month of Tamuz, in the cycle of *ran"u* of the year 1196, during which we had hoped for joy and happiness. Instead, it was turned into mourning, because in that year, too, multitudes of Christians desired to go to Jerusalem to do battle with the savages [the Muslims]."¹³³ Ephraim's statement greatly resembles the opening of the Solomon bar Samson's First Crusade account.¹³⁴ Apart from showing a stylistic resemblance, Ephraim's report reveals his awareness that the rationale behind the irrational anti-Jewish violence had its roots in the unprecedented events of the First Crusade. Aware of this rationale, both the Jews and the Christian secular and ecclesiastical authorities took steps to prevent a repetition of the systematic devastation of the First Crusade in the later crusades. But as European Jewry moved into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, other powerful forces such as murder and blood libels and fantasies of host desecration and well poisonings proved much more devastating to European Jews than the nexus between Christian feelings of defeat in the East and displacement of violence against Jews in the West.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 130.

¹³² Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 161.

¹³³ Habermann, *Sefer Gezerot*, 131.

¹³⁴ Haverkamp, *Hebräische*, 247; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 243.

¹³⁵ Chazan, *European Jewry*, ch. VI; Robert Chazan discusses the deterioration in the conditions of European Jews in *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), especially chapters 4-7. See also, Ivan G. Marcus, "A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis: The Culture of Early Ashkenaz," in David Biale *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2002) 484; Shepkaru, *Jewish Martyrs*, 259-262.

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